The Great American Black Hero Pt. One: Little Angels

B. L. Peterson

Published by B. L. Peterson, 2024.

The Great American Black Hero
PART ONE: LITTLE ANGELS
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by
B. L. Peterson

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INTRO

It is 1950's rural Mideastern America.

"Summertime and the livin' *is* easy."

Here I am nine years old and having the time of my life! I am in the attic of our 4 bedroom house, one room that was actually kind of a storage area big enough for me to fit in so I made it into my secret fort. And my G.I Joe is escaping from Russia with top secret documents! He is like a black James Bond in khaki pants! He has to get out of the Chemistry Lab before it blows up from the bomb he set for 60 seconds to decimate the enemy!

G.I. Joe made it out of the Chemistry Lab and scaled down the building 3000 feet up! {Actually G. L. Joe was in a shoebox hanging from a string from my attic window as I lowered him to the ground.}

Will he make it?!

{"No! I am not playing with dolls, penis-head," I told this guy at school, "G.I. Joe is an ACTION FIGURE, you dock!!" {That was like dick and cock as one word so it was longer a 'bad word'! And a 'dock' did *extend* far out into the waters!}

G.I. Joe is scaling down the Russian Laboratory wall {the side of our house on a shoestring} in his aston-martin plane: {a shoebox} but he is spotted! "Oh nooooo! What are we gonna do?"

The Politsiya Rossii (Полиция России) or the Police of Russia try to stop him and drop a fire bomb {a wad of lighter fluid soaked tissue} in the astro-martin! They hit him with the fire bomb! Fook! It fell into the shoebox! We're going down!

"G.I. Joe is on *fire*!"

"Fook!"

G.I. Joe *really* did catch on fire and the fire burnt the rope and my G.I. Joe tumbled to the ground in a ball of smoke! I ran down three floors {I was in the attic} to get to him before he became a plastic, crispy, critter!

It was too late! G. I. Joe had done his last mission impossible as I threw the glob of melted plastic in the trash. Fook! It wasn't my birthday or Christmas! How could I get my mom to buy me a new G. I. Joe *action figure NOW!? This would require some supermind processing!*

"Charlie! Charlie!" It was Dorothy our next door neighbor and best friend of my mom and dad which, of course, made Two-balls Wilson ie: Charles T. Wilson, her son, our best friend and one of THE TERRIBLE TRIO, {The Terrible Trio was Charles, my brother, and myself} as we called ourselves.

"You got to go to Sunday school!" His mother cried out. That was the death bell on Sunday morning!

I hated Sunday school! Though it was less than an half an hour on Sunday morning, that was one ½ hour too long! I had things to do like play with toys and watch TV and get a new G.I. Joe action figure! Sunday school was just fooking *boring! I already was a good person, well, most of the time, how fooking good was I supposed to be!? I was still a kid!*

So, The Terrible Trio would get together *before* Sunday school and get in as much playtime as possible in our Sunday School best attire.

G.I. Joe had died so I was now a Chemist and spy for the secret C. I. A. in my laboratory making a formula {I had one of those little chemistry sets you could do minor science experiments with}, that turned you invisible. I had to help Two-balls Wilson escape the Russia Police!

I threw the color dye {my secret formula} right on Charle's brand new white Sunday School shirt.

He was anything but invisible!

So Charlie could not go home, which was next door, for I had accidently stained his white Sunday school shirt with some dye from my Chemistry set that only got worse when we tried to scrub it out! I was a mad scientist for the Government Secret Service and had thrown my formula on Charles to make him invisible, it resulted in a big red patch on his shirt that his mom was definitely going to yell and scream at him for.

Seriously, she was always calling him a 'fool or an idiot.' And this was the guy who finished college before I did and was one of my biggest inspirations for me finishing college also, the first one in my family to do so. My niece went on to get a M.A. degree I thought was impressive.

But right now at 9 years old with a big rusty stain on half his shirt, Two-balls Wilson was in deep shat!

My brother and I went into our house to hide till Sunday school started so I looked up my mom:

"Hey moooooommmmm!?"

"Yes, What is it?"

I'm glad she did not say Bruce, I never liked that name much till I saw it was the name for the Shark in Jaws, and the character's name of the guy who saved Fay Wray in the original 1933 movie King Kong, Bruce Cabot. Also Bruce Willis { I claimed Lenny Bruce also, loved his dark dada humor}all shared the same name I did and that was super kool! Besides that, it sucked!

It was too gay! My name was Brewster! My grandmother gave me the name of Bruce, and my brother's name Bernard too. Well at least it wasn't Ugguhbooguhgooha out of Africa!

"If I am good enough all week, can I get a new G. I. Joe next week?"

"We'll see honey," she said, "We'll see."

Bingo! That was close enough for me! I was in the ballpark, now all I had to do was hit a homerun!

"Look at your new shirt!" We heard it coming from Charles' house next door. "Right before Sunday school and you don't have a clean one either, do you?! Well, keep your coat on when you are in church, just like that, you *fool!"*

Our parents never-ever talked to us that way.

Never-ever.

Not even a hint!

Chapter 1

Mom and Dad

“Brewster!"

The teacher called out to me in the second row.

"Brewster! Brewster!!"

I snapped too. "Yes, mam!?"

"Wake up! You're daydreaming again!? You know there is no sleeping in class!"

I lifted my heavy head and eyes off my desk and came out of my daydream.

The 8th grade sucked!

Even then I did not have many friends and I always felt like an outsider. An outsider looking in. As you grow older you find that friends come in the variety of two kinds, those who are assets to you and those who are liabilities. Friends that are liabilities don't make good friends for long.

Anyway not having many friends made school more 'fooking' boring than ever. I was so meek and mild you thought I was Clark Kent. It seemed I was always dreaming of being some kind of superhero. Like Michael Jackson I wanted to heal the world!

I got good grades. Good grades? I aced every class I was in when I was in elementary school, but it went more like this when I brought those good grades home.

"Mom! Mom!" I screamed as I ran into the house with my report card full of A+’s.

It was 1958 and I had my first Report Card from Kindergarten school. This was the fifth year in a row that I brought home a report card with straight A's. No B's. No C's. All A's. I was really proud of myself and wanted my mom to be just as proud.

Only one other girl in my class had done the same thing. The teacher said that we were 'special'. I believed it. There was something about me that seemed special to me but the only response I ever got from the other children when I tried to figure it out was, "You’re weird!" I was not ‘weird’ I was different, unique is more like it, but wanting to fit into the 'group of my peers' this made me act in ways to please them more than myself. The weirdest thing I ever did at that time was pick my nose, fart, and watch T.V.

That is how I got good grades. I was a perfectionist.

Being a perfectionist can be very energy draining!

Christianity taught me that and it made me a butthole to others as well as myself for a number of years. I was too judgmental and no one could live up to my standards.

Everything I did had to be top notch. Nothing out of place. Everything by the Law! Don’t even think about sinning! I was pretty much a holy tyrant of the worse kind.

This kind of attitude can wear a little kid down fast! You see, today I don’t believe any PERFECT MAN ever walked the earth. You can have an IDEA, a CONCEPT of a Perfect Man but as far as a real person who never did any wrong, or is this sense was not HUMAN. No. I outgrown Jewish and Greek fairy tales and myths.

You can believe what you want.

No perfect man ever walked the earth and to think that God made these inferior evil beings, when he could have easily created superior, good beings in the first place is not my fault and doesn’t make any rational sense anyway!

The only thing the bible ever taught me was that I better save and heal myself.

Besides, it is all based on myths, pagan gods and rituals anyway.

However, this was no big deal, at least not to me. It was my mom who I wanted to impress the most. My mom. Not God or Jesus. Not my brother, not my sister, or dad, but my mom!

I wanted her to *praise* my good grades! I was very proud, I was not perfect, but I was darn near close!

My brother, being 10 ½ months older than me, was one of my modern day heroes then, but it still was my mom who I wanted to show how smart I was.

"A mom is a child's first god."

Mom didn't seem that impressed by my report card. In fact, she did not seem that impressed at all! So was it because she expected me to make good grades or was it because she just did not give a fook!? I was sorely disappointed and didn't really care if I made good grades in school or not as long as I had enough credits to pass a class.

First Lesson I learned about women: They can break your morale completely!

My heart was crushed or was it my brain cells? Either way I didn't really give a fook about school much after that, it was more important to be popular with the 'in crowd'.

So I became the class clown.

But my mom was a good mom and I don't just say that because she is my mother. Mom always made sure we had everything we needed and my dad made sure she had everything she needed for her and us.

'This house was clean!' I would say like the little old lady in the movie Poltergeist, This family was blessed.

I did not consider ourselves lucky, for I saw how hard my dad worked to give us what we had. He sacrificed his whole life to his family, I am sure as many other good fathers do for their families also.

And I had nothing else to judge my family from. What was 'normal procedure' to me was not the same as the black kids in the ghettos. I had no idea at the time. I loved the life I lived and lived the life I love.

Dad had built a divine bomb shelter. I haven't a clue of the real world for a black person in 1958, there was no race color, no racism, we were all the same as God and the President said: "All men are created equal." I guess God said that more than man did.

"Should have stayed at home...listened to my 'ol man!"

My teachers started wondering why my grades were slipping and I would shrug my shoulders and say, the old proverbial saying, "I don't know."

Everybody took that for an answer with a strugged of their shoulders as if to say it is in your's or God'[s hands now.

Bad call, you got to do your best no matter what. Let nothing hold you back or down.

I had to make up for those bad grades and I had to learn not to let the external world influence me to negative actions.

I was easily influenced. Feeling like the 'outsider' I did a lot to please other people to the detriment of myself.

Even believing in God then, my main thing was to impress my mom, not God or Jesus, you did that by being good and programming yourself with the bible everyday.

You know that old scripture 'hide the truth in your heart?' I had memorized almost all of the bible and could quote you the most popular scriptures by heart.

Well, how can you be a Perfectionist if you don't know the Law!? Talking about going overboard!

My mom and dad were the koolest. {I spell kool with a 'k'}, I mean we had our ups and downs like any other family, but I had a happy childhood and parents who loved us and nurtured us and didn't yell at us or whoop us {too much}, or tell us we were 'no good', or 'unworthy'. My childhood was like a Michael Jackson Carnival ride. It was, well, PERFECT!

Mom, who was mainly in charge of discipling us and would sometimes get Dad's belt to whoop us for something *I am sure my brother Bernard did*, and when we saw her coming we would start running around the house and she would have to chase us, and I would end up under the bunk beds in our bedroom where mom couldn't get at me.

I don't know where the fook Bernard went, but when mom could not get at me under the bed, and I would not come out like she said, she would actually start laughing and if the offense was not too bad it was forgotten with a 'don't do that again because of so-in-so and so-in-so...

If if was real bad, {that normally took both of us} we would sort of laugh and try and play it off till mom said:

"WAIT TILL YOUR FATHER GETS HOME!"

Uh oh! We froze. We were in deep shat!

My dad, the stoic type, worked long hours for the railroad station before he became an Administrator for the Lompoc Prison Facility and moved to Lompoc, California in 1966.

My dad was so stoic that he and Marcus Aurelius would have been the best of friends! Twins! Well, not quite!

In Columbus, Ohio, before he left, my dad would come home from work in his uniform, grab his favorite chair in the living room and the day's newspaper, and sit there till dinner time reading the daily news. But I was sure he was watching us from the corner of his eye.

That is the picture I have of my dad, sitting in his favorite chair, uniform still on, waiting for dinner, reading the newspaper.

He would eat, go back to his favorite armchair, watch Television and then go to bed.

Next he would get up in the morning, Shower, poop, I'm sure, shave, eat breakfast, kiss the wife and go to work.

Get off work, eat, watch TV, shower, shit, go to sleep. The next morning, 'Get up, shower, poop, shave...} I called this The PROGRAM, THE GAME, THE CYCLES OF HELL. The ROUTINE! The old RAT RACE! MAKING A LIVING!

Then add two hours of driving just to get to work and back!

Now I am not saying my dad had it any worse than any other worker in America at that time, but looking back on it now I can tell you my dad was a champion. He had in a sense achieved the American dream, the thing was, it did not last long enough, at least not for me.

I swear I don't think my dad said a 1000 words to me since I knew him! I really loved him, but like God I loved and feared him at the same time and that made me keep a distance from him, not that dad was the 'give me a big hug' type either.

I don't remember my dad ever hugging me, kissing me, or even holding me. I swear, I think that was because my grandmother tried to emasculate me. Yes, she tried to turn me into a sissy. Did she secretly hate men? Black men!? Did she hate my dad, her *only son* for leaving her when he married and is taking it out on me? Seriously, you would be surprised. But Grandma was the sweetest grandma I ever knew too!

Our Mom would rush us off to Sunday school every Sunday morning and Dad would sleep in when mom would let him. On rare occasions when he did accompany us to Church he would make me laugh because he looked the way I felt, and had a look on his face like, 'What the hell am I doing here?'

His eyes were as bloodshot as mine used to be when I smoked ragged weed.

Anything to please Mom, that was my dad.

And now that I think about it, my 'motto' too!

My mom took care of everything, cleaning, cooking meals, making sure we got off to school in clean clothes, did the shopping, oh yeah! I told you that already however this is also where we get our morals and 'life plan' to deal with life. And my mom did an excellent job too as did my father. I am making it clear that there was no domestic violences in our home. I never even saw my dad and mom argue but I think they did on occasion in the bedroom behind close doors.

So our education into life was more a thing of my mother's wisdom than my father's.

My dad was not there by the time I started to shave so he never taught me how to shave, but huh, do you need a dad for that anyway?

Our dad gave us a few good 'pointers' about life, but it was mom who enforced all the discipline actions.

One of the main things I remember our dad teaching us was not to annoy the cops. And now that I remember my dad was working in a prison system in Ohio.

We would make a joke at school by saying, "My dad is in prison!" and when the person said, "Oh, What's he in for!?" We would laugh and say, "He's a guard, stupid!"

Don't break the laws of the land and end up in jail. Dad made sure we knew that law. I never saw him carry or read the bible at any time and my dad being a Freemason told me why.

I thought that was so kool. Being a member of the Freemason fitted my father well and seems to be where my true spiritual roots stemmed from, except I was not as stoic as my dad was. I definitely was a 'freeMason.'

Being a Prison Guard himself before he retired, dad said in so many words jail or prison was not a nice place for a black man {or anyone for that matter} to be and cops did use more violence on black men than any other race. And at that time in the early 1950's that was the case though I never witnessed it first hand thank goodness!

OK! Got the picture!? Went to jail twice in my whole life. One for curfew, {my brother bailed me out being over 18}, and the other one was for a parking violation I didn't even know I had.

I went to jail on a ticket that was two years *after* I got the ticket, and on one Saturday night being stopped on suspicion of something, {I was smoking a blunt in the alley} I was arrested, spent half the night in jail where I smoked a blunt rolled from the pages of the holy Gideon bible, {No, the cops did not find the joint when they searched me} and was out the next morning. I tried to make an experience out of any place, any time I happen to find myself in.

I always lived by the motto: "Live today, die tomorrow!"

We were brought up Lutheran and I didn't mind because the church service was only an hour long on Sunday morning and that was long enough for me. I didn't know it then but being brought up in an almost all white Lutheran Church was quite different from being raised in the black Christian church. And the Christian ideology is quite different between the two churches.

As far as I was concerned, I just had to be a 'good boy', not curse, not think evil or sexy thoughts, not harm anyone, not 'talk back' to my parents, love my neighbor as myself, read the bible everyday, prayed without ceasing {boy, that was a hard one!}, tithe a 10th of my paper route money to the church, help little old ladies across the street, and go to heaven when I die...IF I passed the test, for I was STILL to be judged on the day of Judgment and *wooooeeee* be unto me that day if I didn't come out PERFECT!

Man! They scared me so badly with religion that I loved Jesus so much we could have been a gay couple!

All I had to do was accept Jesus as my lord and savior.

Kool, I could do that, but being a 'good boy' proved to be a bigger challenge than I thought. You have to remember we are TOLD we are SINNERS, and a sinner will do what a sinner does no matter how 'save' that sinner may be until he is saved and then he is a 'saved sinner' and have jumped from the frying pan into the fire.

Everyone who was a Christian was smarter than me. Knew more than me, and especially the ministers, or anyone who had 'been in the Lord' {saved} longer than me and that was just about everybody around me.

I literally had 'nothing' for a long time {and it was counted as a 'virtue' to me by the Church, though I wanted to be rich like everyone else, I made just enough money to get by}, that was the religious life for me, to have as 'little as possible' and still rejoice in the Lord for the 'little I had', Jesus! I didn't want THAT to be taken away too, after all the bible {God} said so!

"He that has little, that will be taken away!" Something like that, the verse went. I was a Perfectionist, everything had to be perfect, exactly by the laws of the bible! God's Word! God's Divine Plan! Whatever that was, I was doing it! I think!

Either way, no matter what I was going to be, I was going to be the best there was. So when I became a Christian I gave it my all, 100%. I was the best 'sinner', I mean Christian the world has ever seen.

My dad or mom never told me that I could not be anything or do anything. I mean you can as a SPIRITUAL BEING {SP} but that came much, much later in my life.

Though there was not a lot of 'pep talk' in our house, I always felt I was free to be whatever I wanted to be, and at that time I wanted to be a Veterinarian till I saw our dog Teak, poop all over the examination table when the Veterinarian gave her her rabies prevention shots. As a little kid I didn't know dog *poop* was part of the job description of a Veterinarian!

I didn't do 'poop! Grossed me out completely. Didn't want to be a Veterinarian no more though I still have a deep love for dogs and got angry if I saw anyone abusing one.'

With three children, {it appears my dad always did like big families}, two cars, a big three bedroom house {there was an attic that could have been converted into two more bedrooms, and a basement that made a dark but good recreational room my dad started one day but never finished}. A dog, a Canary bird {which the dog ate}, and a 'stone-walled fence', we had a slice of the American Pie. We were living the American Dream for a black family in 1950's America. I had no idea and in a sense we were kind of 'spoiled children'.

It was not the biggest dream, but it *was* the American Dream...

At least for a nine year old black kid.

Bernie and I would have the best time pretending we were these super rich businessmen who ran multi-million dollar companies.

We were the CEO's who made millions upon millions of dollars!

He was Mr. Nelson, and I, Mr. Morgan.

It never dawned on me at the time, these were 'white' characters. There were no good black men as businessmen images to look up to or respect in the 1950's-unless you considered 'Amos and Andy', the only black TV show about two 'crooked' uptown black lawyers, as role models.

Amos 'n' Andy was an American radio and television sitcom set in Harlem, Manhattan's historic black community.

First episode was in 1951.

Final episode was November 25, 1960.

TV adaptations: The Amos 'n' Andy Show; 1951–1953.

Other names: The Amos 'n' Andy Show; 1943–1955; Amos 'n' Andy's Music Hall; 1955–1960.

Sponsored by: Pepsodent Toothpaste; Campbell's Soup; Rinso; Rexall Drugs}.

What is meant here is that in order to be successful or rich you were 'indirectly given the subconscious suggestion' you *had* to be a white man, if you were a black man, you were a crook even if you had a professional job.

Of course I did not know that then. However, I know it too well now, this was a bad mind-set. Something that has to be overcome. And I overcame this long ago.

We were literally being brain-washed as second-class citizens and stupid, poor ones at that. Television was making sure of that and the fact we were not taught any true black history in those days, I can see how we had a generation of low esteem negros in America, I being one of them. Yet, this is no excuse for many blacks who went on to have good jobs and some even secured the American Dream like we did. However, the reality of how shall I say the obstacles that were deliberately set up to make advancements for the black man difficult is no fairy tale. As you already well know.

I was always the super-quiet one. And the less physical. Maybe that was because my Grandmother dressed me up in 'gurl clothes' and told me I was 'Daddy's little girl!' What the hell was she doing to me!? I had these memories

blocked out of my mind for years but boy how it negatively affected my life and destroyed any relationship I might have had with my father, and with black women, and it made me think I was gay for a long time when I wasn't.

Just because two people live together does not mean they ARE together.

I would sit at home and wish my father was Robert Young of Father Knows Best. He was so 'perfect and understanding', always with a smile on his happy face. He could solve any problem within a half hour!

Also, I had a helluva memory for details. I was the MIDDLE MAN, not the father type but not the gay type either which was the far end of the other side of the spectrum of my Man scale. One end was the super-super stoic straight man like my Father and Grandfather, the middle of the scale were the bi-sexuals and way at the other end of the scale were the gay men.

I was not bi-sexual, I was the MIDDLE MAN as up to now very UNKNOWN and UNHEARD-OF. I was not the sportsman but I was not the ballerina either! I was not the lady's man but I was the gentleman. I was not the smartest cookie but I did not crumple at every question. I was the middle man.

This is the Artists, the Career Man, the Adventurer, The Explorer, the Curious George. These guys have way bigger stakes in mind than just creating and raising a family.

Most are not gay, bisexual, or family men at all. They are in the middle. They really give little thought to sex for their minds are intrigued in some aspect of life normally in the Natural Sciences, Humanities and Arts.

The Middle Man. Many have a scientific mind over a religious mind so some never even marry at all. Since they are single men, many think them strange, for aren't we all supposed to 'be fruitful and multiply?'

They are more MENTAL than PHYSICAL in their actions and suffer for it in a Christian based world for they tend to become more Scientists and Philosophers than Religious Leaders or followers.

I am the Middle Man. There really is not a lot written about our Identity but these are the men who are not afraid to be unique and a lot of them instead of raising a family gives their lives to a good cause or their life's work. That is their gift to mankind.

I did not like sports because to me you were putting yourself in 'harm's way' more so than necessary. Like boxing, you were more susceptible to getting hurt or injured. And in the end some pay an awful price for all those blows to their heads. Why walk in front of the firing squad when you could just as easily walk behind it?

I remember dad taking us to the YMCA one day and when he took me into the shower stall, it was the first time I had ever seen any grown black men fully naked and they had these big, 'long snakes' hanging down in between their legs! Scared the hell out of me and I started crying! Not that all black men are hung, but for a kid it looked like someone had opened a sausage shop! Seven or more black men were in all their naked glory swinging sausage all over the place! As far as I was concerned I was in the snake pit and I was the mouse! Everybody was so much BIGGER than I was, I was scared shat-less! Dick-less? Bad pun! To this day I still am not sure why I was scared, was this an after effect from being almost brainwashed into becoming 'Goldilocks' by my Grandma?

My dad, seeing how scared I was, took me out of the showers but I don't remember much more what happened that day after that, and I had only a few other actual interactions with my dad anyway.

One time he was playing with my brother and I in the snow and he hit me in the head with a snowball and I started crying. He told me it was not that bad and we all went in. Well, darn! That snowball happened to have a lump of ice in it, and it *did* hurt like hell! Did I seem like a 'cry-baby' to my Dad? I thought I did.

My Dad was mostly always at work, he drove over two hours a day to get to work and I wonder now if he did that to get away from my mother?

And on the weekends I would see him work on his cars a lot. I don't remember having many family outings where we all were together as a family. Like on a picnic or eating out together, very rarely it seemed but I could have forgotten.

My sister and her boyfriend and soon to be husband Jim used to play Monopoly with us, but mom and dad were not around and Jim taught me and my brother, huh, excuse me, my brother and I, how to play chess.

It was our Grandmother who took us out the most, that wicked Jezebel that thought I looked better in 'girly clothes and a Buckwheat wig!'

I mean this is no little thing really, this emasculation of the black man was common in America at the time, but NOBODY was addressing the issue and didn't even really look that way!

Look at the first Buckwheat of the Little Rascal movies {Luv those Little Rascals shorts!}, he was made to appear like a 'little retarded black girl' for quite awhile. Now I do believe those guys were just trying to be funny, but this 'the dude looks like a lady' thing carried on for some time in Black movies and TV, and is considered another way of destroying any good self-images of a black man.

The big deal about black male stars putting on dresses in Hollywood today to get ahead in their acting careers all stem from this same thing. I later on went to Hollywood to be a Star, well actor and met Cheech and Chong and Pee Wee Hermann but that's another story, but back to nine year old me!

So I also was the quiet one, but to my dad, I was a chatterbox, the inquisitive one! Well, not really, I can't really remember ever having a conversation with my dad for over 5 minutes, and he never punished us once the whole time he was married to my mom. Not that I can remember.

I remember he sat us down to give us the talk about the 'birds and the bees' and to this day the only thing I learn and remember from that conversation with my Dad was that the birds go 'tweet, tweet!' and the bees go 'buzzzzzz!'

If you gave my brother a basketball, you had better give me a pen and some paper. If you took my brother fishing or camping you better sit me down at the piano.

The Middle Man was I, maybe with a Third Eye.

My brother was more extroverted. I, of course, was the introverted one.

We slept in the same bedroom of a three bedroom house and had those famous, new, bunk beds.

Bernie normally slept on top, being the oldest, and I remember we did have that famous episode where the top bunk dislodged and the upper bed came cascading down on the unexpected victim below. Which of course, was me.

We had a lot of fun together in that room. Some of my happiest memories are there. My brother had always been in my corner.

Dad had delegated 'all power' to mom. That is, he gave her all the money to get things for us, pay the bills and get house chores done. And you wouldn't even know it because my mom went about the house doing all those boring things a good mom does; paid the bills, did the shopping, took care of us and our sister, so there was never a "power struggle" in our home, dad made the money and mom spent it. No problem there.

I never ever saw my dad and mom have a fight. Not once. Not even a verbal fight. Not to say they did not happen.

Seriously, we were as 'perfect' as the actors in "The Donna Reed Show", and "Father Knows Best" except back in black. Of course, there were no complete black families shows to watch back then. I think we had Diahann Carroll who had a son but no father, and she was criticized for being 'too white".

Good grades meant very little to me since then. As long as I did 'enough' to get by, that was fine with me. I certainly didn't put a lot of effort into school, in fact, I became the Class clown for a long time. I said that.

I loved to make people laugh, even if it meant the sacrifice of my reputation {haaaaaa} and grades.

Another bad idea.

No fight. No strife. To say I was a People Pleaser is putting it lightly. Remember this all tied in to me being the good Samaritan too! Making your friends laugh at the expense of the teacher and yourself does not get you a good reputation in school and a teacher who likes you could mean the difference between a D+ or C-!

But I found my goal in life. I was to be an ACTOR!

"TO BE OR NOT TO BE!" That was the ANSWER!

So I started studying everybody. EVERYBODY! Everybody was an actor!

I always thought that Dad was a pretty smart cookie...giving mom the power..then he just sat back in his favorite chair, read the daily news and watched the football games in peace and tranquility.

My dad was so stoic that even if he had been dying of cancer we would not have known it. He seemed content but even if he wasn't he never let us know or let it show.

My mom who was the 'active' one around the house and did all the things a Mid-Eastern American mom would do.

In the rural middle eastern America in those days, you could go to jail for smoking marijuana. I knew that. Robert Mitchum, one of my mom's and mine's favorite actors, had just got arrested for toking a 'marijuana cigarette' on the bus. He was just way ahead of his time I thought, like me.

We did no drugs or alcohol or smoke cigarettes, and mom and dad didn't let us do those things until we were eighteen and legally not under their jurisdiction anymore and could choose to do what we pleased.

My mom and dad drank, but I never saw them drunk or for that matter, found any full or empty alcohol bottles around the house. They made sure to keep it from us. I guess "Adult time" happened *after* we kids went to bed.

I rarely saw them drink either. They did not drink everyday but on social occasions. So, none of my parents were depressed alcoholics. At least as far as I knew.

According to the Zodiac signs, we were going from a Piscean Age to an Aquarius Age. Some say it was Jesus who issued it in the Aquarius Age.

The Piscean Age was a water sign and people drink to have fun and relax according to the water sign.

The new Aquarius Age is an air sign and as you can see today people are more into smoking {marijuana is on the rise} for recreation and even healing according to the 'air sign.'

{Just recently I learned that water has the capability not only to gather information but store information in its cells as 'memory'. This is a very important scientific discovery, for it could be the 'missing communication link' between the physical body and Spirit. Apparently 'air' carries information as sound waves, and 'fire' carries information as 'electricity' and both of these can be influenced by the sound of your voice {matter}.

It could be possible that 'water' also can carry information too and store it. Since all life requires water there may be more to this than meets the mind.

So you could say we have the power to control the elements of the universe and turn them into our favor.}

As a Christian family the only thing we were allowed to put in our mouths were food and liquids.

I was in love with life itself. After we were told 'lights out', I would turn on my flashlight under my bed covers and read a comic or some other book until 2 and 3 in the morning.

In fact I was so much in love with life when I was young, I hated with a purple passion going to bed at night, I had so much more energy, toys, and more imagination to play with and had not gotten to yet, and Bernie, my older brother who I had not tortured for the day yet, {thought Bernie was the real king of torture which grandma told me was called 'aggravation!'}, and there still was a repeat of one of my favorite TV show coming on called Mr. Ed, the talking horse, and I still had about 8 more hours of daylight! I would sleep when I was dead, that was my motto, there was still so much more to do!

I woke up in the morning, jumping on the floor like the Hulk, trying to make the loudest thump my feet could make as I hit the wooden floors, and I was so glad to be healthy and alive and ready to start another fun-filled day full of force and fantasy!

I don't think God or I could have been any happier. I assumed God was as happy as I was!

But soon I don't know if it was the same bug that bit God in the butt also bit me for I also was screaming out,

"I REPENTETH THE DAY THAT I HAVE MADE MAN!"

Or something like that. As far as I was concerned, other people started to bg me. 'Other people were hell'!

Trying to be a Christian made me super evil. I tried to follow the bible word for word as many adults told me, 'hide the word in your heart' which meant to memorize the scriptures of the bible. No matter how much I tried to 'love my neighbor as myself' I made the sad mistake of always putting myself last, the least you might say, and everyone and everything was more important than I was. Talk about low self-esteem!

Almost everyone took advantage of me and if I said anything about it it was MY fault, I didn't pray hard enough or I didn't follow God's divine plan whatever that was supposed to be.

It was Jesus, others, myself, but 'myself' I suffered greatly to the point I was on the brink of insanity. When I committed to something, I gave my all, 100%.

I had memorized almost every scripture in the bible, something to be proud about though they did not call it that, for that would be pride. But instead of 'seeing' God or 'Jesus' in everyone I saw more and more, quote, 'sin' abounding everywhere.

By not judging people's actions even the most lame people walked over me. After awhile being Christian meant being a doormat to anyone who professed to know more about the bible than I did, or anyone who had 'walked the walk' longer than me. Which was about everyone I met.

People in little ways were inconsiderate, selfish, rude, cruel, hateful, spiteful, mean, vengeful, envious, pretentious, deceitful, jealous, and outright psycho.

The more I looked for God or Jesus in people the more I found how selfish and demeaning people could be.

Spreading Jesus' love was really spreading the word of man about God or the bible. I was working for the church most of all, working for the church in Jesus's Name.

This was not love, this was brainwashing. And I was not getting nothing out of it and I was not making any money for myself.

But more on that later, right now...

As I grew up, people went from happy to sad, healthy to sick, glad to mad. They praised God when things went right and blamed man or themselves when things went wrong.

Nothing was fun anymore. Growing up meant growing depressed.

The happy places we laughed in were barren, long gone with the wind. What had happened? I wasn't a child anymore. Life began to suck!

If this was what being an adult was, I never wanted to grow up. I never wanted to be a man. Children lived forever, men died.

The Trinity I admired most were Robert Mitchum, Gregory Peck, and Red Skelton, because my Mom liked them. There really were no black role models for me to follow at that time.

I wrote a song about this that sort of sums up the happiest times of my childhood:

<u>WHEN I WAS YOUNG</u>

"When I was young,
I was all so happy,
Oh, so care-free,
Never lonely.
I had a dream,
You know it lasted forever,
Fading never,
Always better...
When I was young,
I thought I would laugh forever,

Find the humor,
Nothing sacred.
I had a dream
You know it
Lasted forever
Fading never,
Always better.

Then came,
Bad dreams,
Sad scenes,
Mad schemes."
"When I Was Young" © 2016/21 by BLP.
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One of the things I can remember about my brother is him talking me into something which was just plain right out pure evil but fun. Or was it I who talked him into it? Even the devil would have given us a pat-on-the-back for thinking up some of the things my brother and I did.

Though we never hurt or maim anyone, we kept the Peterson's house popping with our little antics!

Here's one of them...

We put the sewing machine needles *in* the couch cushions for the group of socialite ladies that came to visit my mom once a month to discuss the 'current affairs' of the community, which in my opinion was 'what was fooked up about our city and what can we DO about IT' Club.

This really was translated into 'How can we get a better stronghold on the City to see it our way!' Especially since we are the Elite Christians of this God forsaken community! Also, our farts don't stink! Praise Jeezzus! Club.

They were not that bad, but remember you are seeing this story from a nine year old kid's viewpoint and EVERYBODY was funny then. Nothing but God was sacred, and even then I had my doubts!

If it is was not for these ladies, Columbus, Ohio would have gone to hell in a bread basket, a long time ago so they thought.

They were the upper crust of society at that time, {Our mom and dad were living in the Uppity Negro Section of Town}, and it appeared to me that a numerous number of ladies in my mom's social group where eating the upper crust of some big ass pie, big time from the weight they were carrying around.

Of course they were all black ladies and the one token white lady who everybody liked but me. She was like the white people on TV, but in real life! I never saw a white woman walk into a Black home on TV! Hmmmmmmm? Something was definitely up!

So, at that time, being in a predominantly black neighborhood, most of the white people I ever saw were all on T.V. And being nine years old I thought all white people acted like the people on TV.

Like Ward and June Cleaver from the 'Leave It To Beaver Show' Remember Beaver? Come on! This was the late 1950's, did these guys really know they were talking about the slang word for 'vagina' at that time? I think so!

Believe me television has done more for bombarding me with sex through their endless sexual innuendos than any pornography film ever did. And everyone was as perfect and pure as the characters in the 'Father Knows Best Show!'

All I ever did, and loved to death, was watching TV.

I got up...turned on the T.V. I got ready for school, I had some time to burn...turn on the T.V. I got home from school...turned on the T.V. I got my homework done...turn on T.V. I got ready for bed, took my shower, brushed my teeth, and snooked back downstairs to turn on the T.V.!

Besides the few white people in my surrounding neighborhood, this was the closest I had come to knowing white people at the time. Through Television. I state this again for I knew nothing about 'White Flight' at that time and how Whites did not want to segregate, they were trying to get the hell away from us! I thought everybody was like 'Leave It To Beaver!' Everybody loved everybody else! So I thought.

Can you imagine a nine year old black kid walking down the street and every white woman that he saw was June Cleaver? Also, every white man was Ward Cleaver? And every white teenager Wally Cleaver? Such is the power of TV!

A white kid about 16 years old passed me on the sidewalk one day. "H!" He said genuinely. "Hi WALLY!" I said back with that god awful grin you see on black people in The Three Stooges Movies!

Walking on the main streets where the stores where blacks and whites could walk together and shop together, another young white kid passed by me asking me what time it was. "It is ONE O'CLOCK, BEAVER!!!" I said again with that god awful butt-monkey Three Stooges grin on my face.

Looking at me kind of strange, the white kid would sort of hurry away...with increasing momentum!

And we had our black version of Eddie Haskell on our street, named Tony. He had the reputation of being the 'bad boy on the block', the hoodlum in the neighborhood!

I think his worst 'sin' was stealing. But more on that later. Let's get back to the saviors of Menlo Place, my mom's monthly social women's group who held up the Pillars of Heaven in Columbus.

To this day I still think that one white lady was there to spy on us. It was common jargon then that there was one white man for every group of black people to spy on us secretly to make sure we were not plotting on how to overthrow them, or their crooked government! I heard it through the grapevine! They kept an eye on us secretly!

The white lady was a nice lady. Porky like the rest of the ladies and sort of poked her head around like she was a rooster. I couldn't tell if she was just curious or was looking for a significant place to hide a spy camera!

But that didn't matter, Bernie and I had a great plan for our mom's next social gathering we hoped would provide some 'child entertainment'!

So, before my mom's next social meeting and dinner, we hid these long ass sewing needles in the living room couch and waited for our fat-ass, un-expecting GUESTS to arrive.

They finally arrived and were standing all around doing 'small talk'. 'Sit the fook down!' I was screaming in my head, and they finally DID!

Hot dog! This was gonna be better than a three-ring circus! Ed Sullivan could not have put on a better show!

The first lady, {I never knew her name} plotted her fat ass down on the couch and plotted it right-back-up as fast as she could! "Ohhhh Mary! I think you have a spring loose in your couch!" She said, rubbing her fat ass.

And the other lady was already in motion to swat her Bertha butt down also and she bounced back up with a big, "OOOOOOOSHHH! OH MY GOD!" They were long needles.

And, of course, we were rolling in the aisles as our bewildered mother tried to make sense of the fiasco that was happening at her social event in her living room. Afterwards, we did feel sorry for her, she had no idea what was going on!

Then came Mrs. Kruger. IF you breathed the wrong way, Mrs. Kruger knew it and was gonna tell God on ya! And she always had that eagle, evil eye looking at you that made you wanna shit your pants!

Yeah, she was an evil demon just like Freddy Kruger! I would not be surprised if she was married to him! We couldn't wait till she sat down on the couch.

She came in all high and mighty like she always did. {I think the guys in Church liked it because she did have nice tits!} And she plopped down on the couch and... SHE SAT THERE!!! She didn't move a fooking iota! SHE JUST SAT THERE AND SAID AND DID NOTHING!

That needle must have been buried at least three inches up her ass, AND SHE JUST SAT THERE AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED!

My brother and I stopped laughing in motion and looked at each other in amazement with frozen faces. Needless to say, we were not laughing anymore. We always knew that evil Jezebel, Mrs. Kruger, was a witch!

And she sat there for a long time! It seemed to me almost an eternity before she looked at my Mom and said as nonchalantly as you please, "Mary, I think you need a new couch." She needed a new ass! That fooker must have been made out of cast iron.

No one understood what had happened but everyone was standing up! That was when my mom called us into the room.

"Boys! Boys! Come in here!"

We beckoned to our mother's call and went into the living room to put our best foot forward.

"And you know my boys don't you, Bruce and Bernard?"

"Oh yes, they are such darling little angels!"

"Oh yes!" My mom said proudly.

"They are my perfect little angels."

You could almost see the halo above our smiling heads.

Chapter 2

And Here's Brewster!

After getting away with that little fiasco, we moved on to "Family Bloopers number two."

"What the hell is that?!" I asked as my brother showed me this flat red balloon like thing.

"It's a whoopie cushion."

"A what?!"

"Here, watch!"

He blew up the inflated rubber device I had never seen before and slid it under the cushion where our grandmother always sat.

After a while, our grandmother did come out just as cheery and cheerful as ever, offered us some ice tea... and sat down.

Buuwwwwhooooosssse!

Man! That cushion sounded just like a big fart! A big nasty one!

Oh sweet Jesus! It was so funny!

Another Day In Paradise had hit the Peterson's place again! Of course, our good-nature grandmother laughed with us after she saw what we had done and gave us this big surprise look when the 'whoopee cushion' went off.

"Now which one of you put that thingamajig under my seat?" She said, we both pointed at each other.

This thing was like a gift that fell from heaven, or hell, take your pick. But where could we use it to get the biggest laugh?

Mom's social club!

Again the 'Our shat {past tense of poop} don't stink Club' was back at my mom's house again, and this time, we had the whoopee cushion in place, blown up real big for a really, really big sound.

They filed into my mother's living room with all the prescribed greetings, and who else but Mrs. Kruger took the seat with the whoopee cushion under it. Oh, Sweet Jesus, this was going to be better than when Hugh Hefner announced the coming out of "Playboy", with none else, but Marilyn Monroe as the naked {tits only} Centerfold!

We were already laughing. Man! When that thing went off, the ladies would be so embarrassed that they would probably die! Right there on the spot! Sweeeeeeeet!

If they died that would make it even funnier.

We were in the den walking around with our hands at our throats pretending like we were choking ourselves to death and falling to the floor quite dead, except for the laughing.

"Hey, hey!" Bernard said. "There she goes! She's getting ready to sit down!"

I ran to the double doors in the den to peer into the living room just in time to see Mrs. Kruger plot her extra fat ass down on our whoopee cushion! Jumping Jesus! I was going to pee my pants!

I could hardly keep quiet. I was giggling so much. This was gonna be classic! Mrs. Kruger sat down and as we anticipated, out came the loud fart-like resounding sound... but then, another sound cracked the air. But it was not the sound we were listening for.

Mrs. Kruger and her fat ass had BUSTED our whoopee cushion! It had exploded!

She pulled it from under the seat limp as a dock, and there was a hole the size of the San Andreas fault in it! That hussy Jezebel!

"Mary, I think one of your boys left one of their toys under the seat of your cushions. Here!"

Yeah! And you fooked it all up with yo' fat ass, you old hussy, Jezebel! Needless to say. We were no longer laughing. The incident was over and we were at the door looking like those big eyed puppy dogs, as the ladies left the house.

"Now I want to see you two boys in Sunday school on Sunday!" Mrs. Kruger told us before she left. "And don't forget to say your prayers!" Yeah, I had a prayer for her alright. I wish God would blow her fat black ass to kingdom come like she did my Whoopee Cushion...Amen!

Rejected and dejected from our joke 'gone bad', there was nothing left to do but to cheer ourselves up again...instantly.

So, dejected from a joke 'gone bad', there was one alternative that always worked!

Nothing like having good grandparents who loved you too.

It was time for a retreat.

BUT WAIT! Where is Brewster? Isn't this chapter supposed to be about Brewster?

Yes, but I am described in Book two: The Great American Black Hero: The Devil In Paradise. It's all about me. This book, as I told you, is about my brother and family. He is the real hero of the family, he has kept our family together for a long time.

We'll get to me later and on a more personal level. So, besides having kool parents, I had the koolest grandparents in the world in my opinion, especially grandma, sooooo...

“Over the valley, And through the woods, and off to Grandmother's house we go!”

Chapter 3

Grandmama

Grandma was God sent.

Oh yeah! She fell right out of heaven into our laps. And we were forever grateful. Granddad was great too. But it was Grandma who took the cake!

Grandma was in a class of her own. One of my fondest memories of Grandma was when we had gone over to her apartment after she had moved to California and it was pretty much an ordinary mundane day...OK, it was a fooking boring day!

I had no money, which wasn't unusual, and nothing to do, and was pretty much depressed. I had recently left Hollywood and my acting career, haha, and was going to adult school to be an accountant.

Accounting on the first Apple computers would have depressed anyone. It was a nightmare!

So, was there a solution? Yes!

Over the hill and through the woods to Grandma's small one bedroom apartment I went. It was better than seeing a Psychiatrist.

With a smile on her face grandma let me in and before long she had me laughing and in a very good mood. Talking to her cat, and then right out of the blue, she said, "Let's order a pizza and play some cards!"

I'm not sure what it was...the spontaneity? The way she always had a smile on her face, though I knew she was in pain from her arthritis night and day. Was it "spirit transference?"

Whatever it was, like Diana Ross sang, "If there is a cure for this, I don't want it!"

Grandma made everybody feel good. For a woman in her 70's she had more going on than a lot of drugged out teenagers. She had spirit, she had life! And she had love for us.

To this day it is Grandma's grin I still carry on my face. It is still her joyful, soulful voice I hear when I am down.

Now most everyone thinks that their Grandmother is the best Grandmother in the world.

Of course, my Grandmother was the Real McCoy!

In my eyes she was the best grandmother in the world.

Grandmas, make you feel like you were wanted, needed, and loved deeply. All good grandmothers were like this regardless of what Nationality, Race, or Religion they might belong to.

My Grandmother was The Universal Grandmother every child wanted as far as I was concerned.

And I am sure a lot of you can really say the same thing about your Grandmother. Or maybe not.

If not, let me introduce you to my

friend and Grandmother.

She was warm. She was funny. She was sensitive. She was hip. She was wise! She was smiling on a depressing , rainy Monday.

She warned us of 'the sins of hell', but never condemned us for committing them and walked the talk so she had no blame to her game.

She was "love in a smile and a hearty laugh!"

And you see, my Grandmother was really special. She was not your ordinary Grandmother. My grandma had endured quite a bit of hardship not to be a cynical, complaining old woman.

Some of the hardships, and that is putting it mildly, my Grandmother went through, you wouldn't wish on the devil.

Now think about it ?

It is, say, 1935 and Hitler with his idealization of a pure, 'perfect, white, race' was trying to dominate the world. A time when if a black man got away with a crime, the police

would go into a black neighborhood and randomly select another black man to pay for his crime, though he was quite 'innocent' of it. Some were even executed. If it was hard for my sister, then I know it was even tougher on my grandma.

But back to Grandma in the present time.

My Grandmother grew up in a time when prejudice was on the up rise, not the downside like today. It was popular to be prejudiced and to outwardly declare how you hated anyone who was not of your race.

I brought this up only so you can get a better idea of what the times were like in America when my Grandmother was coming up. With my attitude and negritude today I would have been lynched at the age of five.

But Grandma never talked about her hardships, like I told you already, she always had a smile and a grin for you.

'Make a Joyful noise unto the Lord,' was my grandmother's favorite bible verse.

I remember Grandma telling me a story that day I still remember to this day!

My Grandmother's sister had just died and my Grandmother was so poor, she didn't even have enough money to give her sister a decent burial. She had been cheated out of the insurance and retirement pay our grandfather was supposed to get from his job, and no one, at least in the Henderson's family had any money to hire a lawyer, and my Grandmother did not know what she was going to do about her sister's burial costs.

So my grandmother told me she simply got down on her knees and prayed to God.

Two days later my Grandmother received one of the insurance checks my grandfather had been cheated out of...just enough to bury her sister. She never heard from the company again.

I know that day, something or someone responded to my Grandmother's prayer. Since I was having my big doubts

about God at that time in my life, I contributed Grandma's good luck to magick.

My Grandmother could do magick!

Another time I remember I had a great time with grandma playing cards and just talking and laughing.

It was towards the end of my Grandmother's life that my Grandmother had moved to Lompoc, California from Columbus, Ohio, where her son, our father was.

Dad was there because his work transferred him there. My ever so cool Grandfather passed away in the 80's from prostate cancer. He had been married to my Grandmother for over 35 years. I really felt lost.

And, of course, that was the main reason Grandma moved to California.

Grandma had a one bedroom apartment on the south side of Lompoc, and I had come up to live in Lompoc from Hollywood, staying with my Father. I wanted to stay there long enough till I could get my own apartment.

Over the river and through the woods I would go to Grandma's house at least three times a week.

Well one particular visit I remember, it was just a plain, ordinary, doggie-day, afternoon and I had strolled over to Grandma's house just to keep her company.

She greeted me with a smile as usual, and we sat at the kitchen table talking a while when all of a sudden, out of the blue, my Grandmother said,

"Let's make sloppy Joe's and have potato chips and play cards!"

It was like a magic button. The night seems to light up. I lit up. We made the sloppy Joe's, played cards, and talked and laughed!

I don't know why this particular night was so special to me, but it was.

Grandma was always doing something for us. I think the spontaneity of the moment summed up the beautiful life and attitude my grandmother always carried with her.

It would take several books all together to tell you all the wonderful things our Grandparents did for us and our parents.

Even though both of my grandparents are deceased at this writing they will always live on in my heart. My love for them will never die.

How can they NOT go on living in our hearts and minds forever?

That, to me, would be the true definition of Heaven. Those you loved and suffered for you...they showed you eternal LIFE {LOVE} you always possess, and now have more because they lived and their lives blessed and helped you.

If God is alive and NOT dead, then He is alive in us here and now, along with the loved ones we keep in our hearts, here and now, and forever.

In the Presence of a Living Heaven. Not a dead One.

But for now let's look at another extraordinary person who had no formal education, worked as a Janitor at night, drank two bottles of beer every night after work and dinner and watched "The Price Is Right" with my grandma and I heard went to prison for killing a man over a woman.

Who drove us to Florida every year in a new car he traded in *every* year for the latest model.

And whose whole existence was making sure his grandchildren were the happiest kids on earth.

Grandpa...you could not have done it better if I had done it myself!

Chapter 4

Grandpa

If Grandma fell out of heaven, Grand Daddy stroll out right behind her.

There was no way in heaven or hell you would think the gentle "BUDweiser" slightly drinking, white hair, old man, sitting in his favorite armchair in front of the T.V. {You see, even then Grandpa and I had something special in common. We both loved "Bud". But Grandpa drank 'Bud' {Old School}. I smoke 'Bud' {New School}.}

Heeeeeeee!

Now I think it is because women are more emotional that we remember them more.

They make more of an emotional impression.

Or maybe it is because I am a guy and just naturally think of women more.

The women in my life seem to stick out more than the men. The men were supportive and the women were talkative. Maybe that is why.

The women were the lively active ones.

The men are stoic and passive.

You would think it would be the other way around.

And, all in all, these are some of the most remarkable people I have ever met, and they were right here in my own family.

And Grandpa was no exception.

If I ever forget everything in my whole life my Grandfather ever said to me, the one thing I will always remember my Grandpa saying is:

"When you sneeze, blow it ALL OUT! Don't pull it back in. Blow it out! All out!"

I think that was my Grandpa's Philosophy to Life and all the problems of the world.

'To be sure and get the snot {bull——} out!'

It really was a good piece of advice.

In the Martial Arts you are told to exhale forcibly with a loud sound in one exercise to release the 'dead air' in the lungs and body, much like what my Grandpa told me long ago.

Just like a lot of us fail to exhale as deeply as we inhale, forcing, what I call, "the bad air" out. So also we do not force the 'snot' out and the nose {life} and it {energy} stays more 'clogged' than necessary.

And my good old Grandpa, bless his heart, was a 'mountain man' in the city.

He was old, old school and had spent some time in prison for killing a man, but now was one of the most docile and pleasant men you could ever meet.

You would never think that he spends one day out of Sunday school. His demeanor was so kind and gentle.

But he was no 'punk' or what a 'sissy' was called in his day.

Grandpa lived to take care of grandma.

They had been together for over 30 years the longest
marriage in my family I knew who stayed together so long.

And they were 'happy together'!

"Imagine you and me,
Me and you!?
No matter how they toss the dice,
It had to be.
I for you and you for me,

So happy together!"

-The Turtles

That was grandma and grandpa!

We spent the night over Grandpa and Grandma's house a lot when we were in Columbus, Ohio.

She had a two upstairs bedroom house and the other bedroom was made up just for my brother and I.

It was one of the best times of my young life to go over Grandma's house and spend the night or weekend.

Grandma was like me, everybody was different on the outside, and everybody had diverse minds to think as they liked, but the essence of the person, what we call the soul, beyond the thoughts, senses, memory, future projections, emotions, and efforts of the modern mind, was the same for everyone.

There were no 'holier-than-thou" people in my Grandma's book.

No sirree!

People who got on their 'high horse' and tried and put me or my family or friends down got dealt with severely!

My Grandmother would remind them that God made us all the same and no one is better than anyone else. Though this is only partially true I discovered later, it sufficed for the time being.

I laid into people and liked white or rice read them up and down like a good book! Christianity had taught me to be very judgmental!

I thought it was a great philosophy to life, but my Grandpa had some ideas of his own that I didn't necessarily take too.

As I hungrily sat down one morning to one of my Grandma's excellent breakfast, my Grandpa arrived on the scene and noticed how I was eating. I had bacon, eggs, sunny side up, grits, and pancakes all piping hot and yummy and all on one plate and separated! The pancakes here, the bacon there! The eggs over there on the plate.

My Grandpa came over and said: "You don't have to eat your food like that, it's all going to end up together in one place anyway."

I was afraid to ask him what he meant by that.

Too late.

Grandpa began to scrabble everything on my place into ONE meal or as I saw it, one big ugly mess!

"Now eat that!" He said. "That's a *man's* breakfast!"

The eggs, bacon, grits, pancakes, all mix together on my plate in one pile.

It looked like a pool of vomit.

'THANKS THE FOOK ALOT GRANDPA!'

I said in my head looking up at him with the best smile I could muster at the time. I was really pissed!

Thank goodness he left the room with a big grin on his face and my once yummy breakfast ended up in the trash can.

"Now that's a man' breakfast!" I remember him saying.

"Well, I was still a kid and was not ready for a 'man's breakfast!', but I couldn't help but love that man.

Grandpa was a very meek man, but no one took his meekness as weakness. Like my grandma, he had endured a lot and had come through like a champ! I congratulate them on that. I know they lived a harder life than I ever did and thanks to them I didn't.

Oh yeah, and there was this other time Grandpa really came through like a trooper.

I remember one Christmas our parents got us quite a few toys for Christmas. More than the average {black} kid got, even on our street. And I was still pissed because I didn't see the new bikes we asked for under the Christmas tree and tomorrow was Christmas Day.

You see, we had hinted to our parents all summer long how we needed new bikes for the coming Christmas season, and like Burger King: "Have It Your Way!", what the Peterson brothers wanted, the Peterson brothers got! Well, most of the time anyway. Nobody's perfect!

That year, our parents proved to us we were not any more entitled than any other kid, we had 'enough' presents under the tree. 'Enough?' What the hell does that word mean?

Bite your tongue!

It was true we had a lot of nice Christmas presents, but no bikes! What the fook!? Were they trying to teach us a lesson? How absurd! No one treaded on us! Where were those fooking bicycles!?

We sat on the stairs moping even though you could see plenty of gifts for us in the den where the Christmas tree was. But NO bikes!

Then the idea hit my brother. It seems like the best ideas always seem to hit my brother first during those days. Well he was the oldest and I was still fighting a 'barbie doll' secret identity I didn't even know I had!

I still say he got the 'best genes' out of the gene pool.

Me? Well, that's, uh? This story!

Bernie ran to the yellow telephone on the wall. Boy! Wasn't that a modern convenience then! A phone on the wall in the kitchen!

"Hello...Grandma? Can we come oooooover?"

It was Grandpa who rushed out to the store on that cold winter's Christmas Eve night to buy two new bikes. He woke up a store owner on Christmas eve, to make sure there were two bicycles under the Christmas tree by the time we woke up for Christmas day!

GOOD OL' GRANDPA! How could we do without him? Can you spell the word S-P-O-I-L-E-D!? Though that really was not the case.

You cannot spoil a child if you give him or her proper love AND material items they need first, then want.

We were not spoiled kids and we didn't always get what we wanted either.

But 8 out of 10 was not a bad record for a little guy like me!

My point here and the second reason of this book is to salute all 'good {hero} big brothers everywhere!

And to go against all the 'boo-hoo' black books of 'poor-little-old-me' black stories you read too often. It's time for a change. It's time for something different.

When Grandpa died of colon cancer I was in Los Angeles with Beau Bridges in his T.V. movie about the first lady race car driver.

I could not attend my Grandfather's funeral when he died of cancer in the 1980's. I was in Los Angeles pounding the pavement for my next acting job and if you know anything about going after the dangling carrot called FAME, you know you go after it broke as hell, unless you are one of the rich kids who can sit around all day in hope of being called back for a second audition. Others of us had to work for a living. So you got the easiest jobs that paid minimum wage.

I won't go into the details about it now, but even now I am not keen on funerals.

The only thing worse than going to Church or a funeral is going for a wedding! Just kidding! Not!

Wedding and Funerals just weren't my thing!

One was the beginning of death, the other the end of living free.

I think the 'spirit-soul' leaves the physical body PERMANENTLY when we die. So the REAL person is not at the funeral site at all so what the fook am I doing there talking to a decaying corpse?

My loving Grandpa is not with his dead body no more to be moaned over. My Grandpa is NOT there!

At least his 'spirit-soul' is not there, it resides where it alway was, in the heaven of my heart.

Who is the funeral for basically?!

Traditionally, for those who want to make money off the dying and dead.

And I always remembered what my Mom said while she was alive.

"Don't wait until I'm dead to bring me flowers."

Good one, huh!? She got flowers every Mother's Day, and then some, every year, very much while she was alive. I made sure of that. And my brother was always helping her out when she needed it.

There was nothing really special about Grandpa. He had that 'Give me that old time religion grin' that so many old black people had. You know, the old "Yessum! You're right Masta!"-grin you saw in movies like 'Birth Of A Nation.'

But it came out: "Good Morning to you!" With all the pearly whites showing. But again, I don't think I can even imagine all the shat, that my grandma and pa must have suffered from racist people.

They had to learn how to hide their true feelings real well.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that during the 30's and 40's when Hitler was coming into power, Black people were not necessarily the cat's meows.

But here is some of the 'ritualized stuff' we did every summer.

My Grandfather traded his new Lincoln or Buick once a year...every year...without fail! He brought a new car and would trade it in every year. It cost him about $300.00 with his "old car" as a trade in. But for $300.00 he never had to take the car to the shop the whole year.

I thought it was a very good and worthwhile investment. And I probably mentioned before that he took us to Florida every spring like clockwork.

It was our summer vacation, to see our relatives on my mother's side whose houses were elevated up on four stacks of bricks in the Florida Everglades.

I hated Florida with a passion that would make Satan blush. Florida was hot. It was muggy. It had mosquitoes big as horses!

There were signs on the door that said "WHITE ONLY" {which at the time, I thought they meant to 'paint' the door 'white only'}, so can you imagine being chased out of a public toilet by some angry white men and their curse words at nine years old?

And there were these big, gigantic mosquitoes! They were as big as a fooking dawg!! And there were thousands of them! And they flew in swarms, like the fooking wasps, which, by the way, is another Florida nightmare!

And Grandma, who we visited in the small green and white trimmed house with no picket fence, *insisted* that we go outside and play during the hottest part of the day! She did not like us using up her electricity watching TV, the love of my life.

It was hotter than hell in Florida, and the humidity only made it muggy and worse. It made the air thick and sometimes you really did have a hard time breathing.

I remember, seriously, watching two eggs fry on top of a hooded car one day, powered by the sun only.

"You need the fresh air!" My grandmother, on my Mother's side, would say.

She was a short, dark skinned woman who looked like your regular Church lady. My mom told me how she made her go under the porch and hit her head on the floor boards and say bible scriptures if she did something wrong, or 'sinned'.

I never thought making a child hit her head against wooden floor boards was a good way to raise children.

Any strike to the head, doctors will tell you, is not good for the body or the soul.

Great grandma looked a little shoddy during the week and on Saturday, but on Sunday she was dressed to kill, as were all the Church ladies, glancing around in Church to see who had on what, and again they didn't call this pride.

I didn't dislike my great grandmother, but thank God I didn't see her but once a year, and I kept an eagle eye on her like I did that white lady that came to my mom's meetings.

They were not to be trusted!

The whole ordeal of making us go outside in the sunny but deadly weather of Florida was a way of keeping *me* from the TV which was the only thing to do in dreaded Florida for those two ungodly weeks, and Grandmama didn't want to have the TV on during the daytime due to the fact she could conserve on electricity. Fook that!

'I Want My MTV!'

You know what I mean?

Oh yeah, and at the age of nine brought up in "You want it, you got it NOW America", I had a deep, deep passion against being poor. And outside of our immediate family, it seemed, everybody was super poor, and Florida was the hellhole they all lived in.

I hated Florida. Especially with over a 1000 mosquitoes biting on my fooking forehead and the soles of my feet feeling like I just walked through a brimstone garden in Hades!

The only cool thing about Florida, that "REALLY" interested me, and filled me with wonder and awe, {and it took a lot to do that in that God forsaken place}, was a real, honest to God hurricane! Hot diggy! What a fooking EXPERIENCE!

It just happened one day. Great Grandmama told us to come in. It looked like rain. Oh boy! What a rain!!!! There were shields on the windows that came down and covered them.

You could barely see through the small window in the front door. That was as big as a window you wanted to be near in a hurricane. And even then, you HAD to be a little bit crazy!

The hurricane was in full bloom and I was never so excited in my life except when I had those fooking steel Tonka trucks that no matter what you did you could not destroy them. They took our worst and barely had a scratch on them. Find some toys like that today! Timex had nothing on them!

And here I was in the midst of this tremendous storm! It was beautiful! And the wind blew and it was scary! But I was not scared! As far as I was concerned, it was the best thing to happen to Florida, besides the sun going down. And all the mosquitos are dying!

I actually saw a boat go airborne and a car smash into a telephone pole, and a straw of hay split a tree right in half!!!!! Ok! Ok! I'm only nine now!!!! No splitting trees, but I'll be damned if I said an alien came down and ran a probe up my rump you would believe me! Right!?

But it was a real hurricane, and it was fantastic!!!

I love it when Mother Nature is wild and furious, I mean I bet we are all like parasites to Her. Nursing on Her like a thousand goat teats, like a huge opossum and her babies. Ugh!

And She is glad for the few who respect her and 'leave' some for the next generation.

But the millions and billions and trillions who suck on her for life who never leave the nest, she throws in a storm here and there. A volcano erupts and a river dries up. She shakes off some of the 'dead wood', the ingrates who suck off her and mankind without mind or heart.

But who is guilty or innocent? Mother Nature simply does not care.

I loved Mother Nature and all the creatures in her.

After all, I am still just nine years old and have not met the majority of 'assholes' out there. I loved the bounty of Mother Nature that is for our survival and living.

When she 'moves' the earth, the world knows it.

She is God of the material world. Equal to God She can shake up this world as She pleases. And does.

And foolish men and women think they can escape her, breaking her laws, but I am here to tell you, Her laws will 'break' you, before you break them.

She and Her Husband, alone, are the God of this world. All mankind is subject to her. We are all subject to her laws rather we like it or not. No one gets out alive! No one lives forever, save God and His expansions.

But then are we not ALL of God?

Now I won't be so callous to say I was happy when my grandparents on my mother's side passed away. It was a sad event for all I knew about them.

But thank God we had no more excursions to that fooking place called Florida.

Now, I like Florida, for my brother had his house built there.

Just to show you how different we are from each other, my brother and I, and yet in so many ways the same.

To this day, I am still waiting to go down and see my brother's house in person with plenty of sunblock and insect repellent in Florida!

But due to circumstances beyond my control, and I hate to admit this, I am afraid to fly. It is a phobia of mine. I trust man but not that much!

No one can replace my grandparents. No one can even come close!

"I love you Grandpa, may you rest in eternal peace together with the love of your life, here and to come, Grandma! You guys live forever in my heart!"

Wow! I got to take a break!

Since I am only trying to show you pretty much an average Black family that wasn't always singing, 'Nobody Knows The Trouble I've seen but Jesus!'

I was very lucky to have loving parents who cared about us. A kool brother and sister and grandparents.

And several best friends, my brother and I still know today.

I am sort of bragging about my family.

So what? It is my way of actually saying 'Thank you' to them and all that came before them who suffered and died so that I might live a better life!

Like I said.

I was very lucky and grateful.

So? Need a break too? Got to go to the bathroom? Refresh that drink? Relight that blunt?

No problem.

When we come back, I want to introduce you to another favorite person in my family...my sister, Lynn. For it was her who inspired me to 'play' music, sing, and have a great time doing it even today!

So, what would it be like for a nice, intelligent black female teenager in the 1950's, when McDonald's came on the scene, and the Board of Health declared that cigarettes cause cancer?

My sister would know.

Seeing how she was there to see and live through it all.

Chapter 5

Sister Lynn

Even today, when my sister and I talk, we still give credit to each other for getting the other one into music.

I claim I sat on my big sister's lap and played my first piano piece. Whereas my sister claims that I taught her how to sing.

We both could be right, you know, but Lynn was here before I was and she had the 'music in her!'

But one thing that did stand out for me was a rendition of a song Lynn did called 'I'll Never Fall In Love Again', by Dionne Warwick.

She really laid it out and it was a perfect song for her voice.

My sister was a Dionne Warwick type, but yet, still a teen-ager. And I loved Dionne Warwick. She had class.

I wish she could have made it to Hollywood then, they would have *loved* my sister too! She was, as they say, that talented!

And Dionne Warwick had the voice of angels and the demeanor of a world famous singer. By the way, I think my sister got married that year or the following year.

OK? I'll *never* sing that song again!

With my love for music I fell in love with the movie themes: "Theme from the Valley of the Dolls", "Theme from Romeo and Juliet", "Exodus", "Jesus Christ, Superstar," and the theme from "Midnight Cowboy."

They were all my favorite movie themes and I learnt to play each one by ear on the piano though I never took a piano lesson in my life, I loved music so much.

I played all three songs perfectly after months of practicing. It was some years later that a Music Professor of mine, in college called me a Music Prodigy. Sounded good to me. Everybody wants to be somebody or something.

So you see a person who is considered a genius in one field, can be a certain idiot in many other fields. I might have been called a musical genius, but the rest of my life suffered greatly for it never dawned on me I literally had *no skills* to do shat!

Like pride, genius does not pay the bills. But it was amazing how big my self-esteem grew because someone outside of myself recognized my talents. It was later in life that I realized this 'positive reinforcement' of my abilities that was missing in the black family and black community. We seem to be poor at encouraging our children to be something GOOD.

We leave it up to fate or God or Jesus and expect the church to tell him ethics and right conduct.

No one was giving any other person a pat on the back except for big events like graduation or a wedding, and how we cried at the funerals, saying all kinds of nice things about people most of us hated. No wonder I hated funerals!

Lucky for me no one in my family ever put us down, in fact, it was my sister most of all who always encouraged me in my talents!

But music genius or not, I did have a knack for music and everybody loved the melodies and songs I played and created. I contribute that to my sister.

My sister was a kind person, and she took care of us as babies when we were small. I think that was due to the fact she was a girl, and girls in those days could not get away with things they saw guys get away with.

My sister Lynn, who later became a Missionary like my mom, was about thirteen years older than me and my brother, I didn't see her as much as I would have liked too.

But Lynn always worked for the Church and she lived the Christian life like my mom and grandmother before her.

A very intelligent woman, I wish she would write a book about her life. I know it would prove to be very interesting indeed.

Lynn was the best sister you could have. She always helped mom take care of us, and being the oldest sibling in the family.

Lynn did a lot of favors for us like helping us sneak into the downtown movie theater with a brown bag of popcorn she had popped earlier for us to eat when she worked as a teller at the movies.

A pretty good job for a young, black woman in those days.

I can't even remember having one heated argument with my older sister. She was a 'hero' in her own right too.

Lynn gave me three great nieces of which one gave me two new nephews! So kool!

Can never forget my sister, and I could not love her more!

Chapter 6

Big Brother Bernie

Actually I wrote this book about my brother, not me. Like I said he is the real hero of this book!

My brother has always been kool. Ever since I can remember Bernie has always been a good big brother to me. Not once did we ever get into a Knock-em-Down-Knock-em-all-Out fist fight. Never in our whole lives.

Bernie, being 1 ½ months older than me, was pretty quiet and laid back and like our dad could stomach almost any weather and not blink an eyebrow.

But when he got mad at me or was just playing around, which were few and far in between, I was the one who seem to be the more sensitive brother, for he never used physical torture which could easily be detected, but mental torture which could be far worst. He was the wizard of mental torture I thought, but that could had been also because I am a Gemini a mental sign.

My Grandma called it 'aggravation' like the game, but worse! He seems to say things that would push my buttons to the max. If I had one last nerve, Bernie would find it and ride it till I couldn't stand it any more. That was aggravating!

But we had far more good times than bad times in the Peterson's household.

We really rarely argued at all.

But boys will be boys.

One of the reasons I wrote this book as stated before, is that it is a testimony to my happy childhood and the people who made it that way. Being born in a bomb-shelter of love I lived in an almost perfect kid's world.

FUNCTION-FANTASY-FORCE was my battle cry. What more could a kid want?

And since my big brother was the closest to me in space, time, energy and matter I dedicate this book to him, though everyone in my family was great even during the bad times.

So, Bernie is the true Great American Black Hero of this book, and he didn't have to fly in the air through a window or leap over tall buildings to prove it.

He was a 'working-class hero'. The everyday hero that just did his brotherly duty.

After our father left the household, Bernie assumed the role of a 'father' per say. He didn't boss me around, but he helped out Mom as much as he could and me and he started work at 16 years of age and is still working to this date. He will retire soon, but the kid likes to work or loves the money one or both! Heee!

Just being my big brother was all he needed to be. Bernie was everything you wanted in a big brother. On his own merit, like my sister, he would have made a great big brother to anyone. Just like my sister. I was just lucky enough to have him as my own.

Bernie was always there for me. We were the brothers that got along and had fun in contrast to the Cain and Abel story of the bible, God must have liked both of us and both our separated offerings. We had defiled the bible. We went against God's so-called word, no Cain and Abel here! And were the best of brothers and the best of friends. And still are!

And this book is to all the great Big Brothers all over the world! You all, truly are great heroes.

Bernie and I had a ton of fun. And my brother didn't torture me that much, maybe a little less than I tortured him.

Come on, two great minds do not always think alike, and it really only gets out of sync when you have an argument, which were not that many anyway.

We didn't look down on other people but we didn't let others look down on us either.

What was special about this time in America was that almost EVERYONE could afford The American Dream; a good American job, a house, white picket fence, car, TV {in stereo!}, a phone, wife, 2 kids maybe 3, and a family dog.

Though the United States Government made it easy for anybody to get a house, blacks were still discriminated against and few if any were able to take advantage of the Housing Laws that was to make buying a house fair to all.

I was too young to know then, but 'poppa' was NOT a 'rollin' stone' and 'mamma' was not singing the blues everyday either.

Our dad loved and provided for us as any good father would. With demeaning phrases like: "You're on Welfare!" and "Who's your daddy?" I wanted the world to know my dad was home every night after a very hard day's work. He wanted a family and he had a family.

I am not bragging' but this was not your typical black family you read about in other coming-of-age black story books. We were not a bickering, low class, poverty-stricken ghetto home, the ones the media and book publishers seem to like a lot.

We were pretty much an upper middle class family and had much more to be happy and grateful for then to be crying and wanting for.

We were simply, honest, hard-working, law-abiding citizens, a little spoiled, but who doesn't want to spoil their child to some degree?

My dad worked all the time and Bernie started working when he was sixteen years old and hasn't stopped since, except for a brief vacation before he joined and retired from the Air Force.

I get so tired of hearing that 'niggas are lazy and don't want to work'. This may be true of some black people, but the majority of blacks work and many don't because they were denied the tools of work in exchange for welfare and food stamp programs.

Sure, there are black people who do not want to work and some of them can't for they do not have the skills, but there are white people like that too, and Jews! But not much is said for the blacks who do work and have some measure of success.

The Church, Government and State all profit from a large percentage of poor people. That is why they make suffering and poverty a 'virtue'. Few escape it. For a man with a $20,000 job a year and four kids is in as much poverty as the man with no job at all.

While all us other 'educated niggas' {namely me} went to college to get a higher education, my brother was out doing what most successful millionaires do today, WORKING and making money, and saving it, and spend it wisely.

Bernie simply went to work. Made some money. Saved some money, and Invested in his future. Today, like his daughter and my niece, I still think they are the most affluent people in our family, besides me! Haaaa, but I am a late, late bloomer!

I am proud of both of them. I was proud of everybody in my family whether they had achieved anything in this world or not, no reward can take the place of real love.

I am not putting down going to College either, and getting a degree, but like High School, College doesn't teach you how to MAKE money, a very needed skill I didn't have. And a B. A. Degree was not going to have you eating steak and eggs every morning for breakfast or driving a Lamborghini down the road.

In fact, I am proud of everyone in my family for in their own right, they forged a good life for themselves and we helped each other when we were together.

But my brother and niece really succeeded where others with the same potential and obstacles often failed. They were not extraordinary, but I think both of them prove to be a good example of what you can achieve in this world if you put your mind to it.

When Bernie and I decided to serve our Country he went into the Air Force and told me to 'follow in his footsteps', but I knew that no matter how much the recruiter told me my brother and I would be together for the whole tour of the Air Force I knew he was lying. We would not be able to be together the whole service tour, maybe the first six months or year but after that we might be given separate orders in separate places. And that would be that.

They just didn't tell you that yet. You went where our Government wanted you to go and if your brother or best friend didn't make it, oh well!

So my brother joined the Air Force {good decision}, I, wanting to be different and follow in my 'own' footsteps, joined the Navy {bad decision!}

The Navy! It wasn't just another job, it was an adventure! You can say that again!

I liked the Air Force much better too, it seemed more controlled and stable than the Navy and I would have joined also, but that was being so much like Bernie.

I already had stolen all of his good traits, {whenever I say a good or desirable trait in someone else, it mattered not who they are, or their skin color, I would 'adapt' any good traits I could find and make them my own.

They became part of my personal style.

So there I was in the Navy instead, not knowing that I hated water and would never develop my sea legs. I ate a whole bottle of seasick pills a day and was lucky to only have two weeks of sea duty the whole time I was in the Navy, four years and eight months too long!

I thought I was too much like my brother already, except when it came to the gene pool. After all he did GET all the best of the genes as far as I was concerned.

He was the robust, healthy one. I seemed to have or catch every disease in the book, and then some.

But I always 'stole' {adapted} what I thought were the best attributes of a person.

For instance, if a person seems to excel at being kind I would try and duplicate that kindness in my life the same way. My brother's daughter, Cindy raised two children mainly on her own, held down a full time job and got her M.A. degree in the field of Social Services.

And she did this as a single mom showing, you don't have to have a romantic partner to fulfill your dreams. I admired her for that, for not many Black women get an opportunity like that and follow through. Too many women I think and especially Black women think that the only purpose they have for coming into the world is to have a baby. To procreate.

They do nothing about learning skills or a trade to ensure their future and if they get an unscrupulous man as a husband who contributes nothing to the family or leaves her with the baby and the bills she is likely to succumb to the pressure of all of it and end up on welfare. Thus we have a ghetto filled with children who repeat this same 'pattern' over and over like clockwork.

But this is not the case with all Black women thank goodness. In fact, nowadays black women are doing better than ever, but still in very limited parameters.

You have many who have gone on to have a career and a family or just a career.

A woman doesn't have to have a baby to be a woman and a man doesn't have to have a woman by his side or behind him to be a man. These extreme stereotypes, along with the Catholic Church injunction that once married is always married {can you spell M. A. F. I. A.?} has caused more domestic violence than lack of money.

And many Black women proved that if you set your mind to something it certainly can be achieved if you persist with a partner or not.

I wish more black women would write about their successes and their woes in lieu of helping others.

Obstacles need not stop anyone from success and they can only stop you if you let them.

I was proud of Cindy and told her so. We talked on Facebook and she came to see me, {I was in California and she was in Virginia}, which was very nice. I will never forget that.

After I moved to Lompoc to see my Dad and Grandma, coming up out of Hollywood where I pursued acting, Bernard would come out to see me at least once a year, all the way from the island he worked on in the middle of the Atlantic ocean to California. Being on a 'limited income' my brother was the one who ensured my 'creature comforts'. If you want to call 'living life' sitting up looking at four blank walls because you have no money, getting a computer and TV from your brother can really do the trick. Not that I depended on him, but he surely helped me out when I needed it.

Later on in my life, I developed a tumor called Cerebriform Dermal Nevus on the left side of my brain and I was diagnosed with schizophrenia. It took them over three months to identify what kind of tumor. I was diagnosed with schizophrenia and went on Social Security for I couldn't hold down a nine to five job and I needed an income.

Later I found it was because I was in DISAGREEMENT with what SOCIETY called "reality" that I was labeled 'insane'.

I was not insane, I was depressed.

Religion had failed me and I had to find a new happiness and joy.

Perception and agreement creates what is called 'reality'.

Two people can see the same thing and disagree on what it is or what it means.

If we both were looking at a tree and I called it a 'tree', and you called it a 'horse', one of us is going to the loony bin.

To think outside the box of the status quo is a prison sentence and abandonment.

I did have some problems in my life. But who doesn't?

I found it hard to work. Not because I was lazy, but because I saw how I made the 'other man' rich while I got pennies for my precious time in an eight hour job. It was like trading the precious moments of my life for pennies. It just was not worth it to me. They could not pay me enough and besides I really didn't have the skills to make a lot of money anyway, this I was not aware of.

The only commodity you can't get back in life is TIME.

You only get so much earth time. Some become stars, others, stardust.

To me the 'trade off' and the ratio of low or no money to hours in a day was a luxury I could not afford. I could not do it.

If I was going to work it was going to be for a high paying creative job that I could enjoy and feel happy about and go to in the morning.

I worked at some jobs in Hollywood and all you did was con the other person out of their money somehow by calling it a "free gift". It really made me sick to my stomach.

Now I am a good worker. A very good worker. I was brought up on the 'The black man had to work twice as hard for the same salary' methodology.

When I did a job, I gave my 100% and put my all into it. I loved money, so I thought. Now I think I just wanted to 'get rich quick', but the 'get rich quick' jobs were one inch on the legal side of the board and you were paid to 'act & con', not give people a good deal or value for their money.

If I had to work long and hard all my life, it was not going to be to make minimum wage and struggle in poverty the rest of my life, telling me all the time, "Be thankful for what you got, when you had close to nothing and losing it all anyway."

Though I liked creative writing, I was going to be an Actor. Everybody loves a Superstar. Who doesn't dream of being a movie star? But then how many people actually pursue it?

I knew the odds of being a well paid actor were slim to none. But as they say, 'If you don't play, you can't win.' At least I was pursuing my dream job and still am glad I did. I would not exchange the experiences I had for nothing, including some of the real movie stars I met in person like Gregory Peck, The Fifth Dimension, Cheech and Chong, and Neil Carter.

So off to Hollywood I went, but more about that in book two:

"The Great American Black Hero, Book Two: 'The Devil in Paradise."

The Peterson's were not the perfect family, but we could have given the Donna Reed Show a good run for the money. We were that well disciplined.

My mom made sure of that. She handled almost all the discipline in our home and never did she ever have to beat us, though we were threatened a lot with getting beaten by the belt, or the dreaded "Wait till your father gets home!"

My mom was the kind of mother that cleaned the house before the maid came to make sure the maid did not come into a dirty house. OK! She was a bit of a perfectionist too!

This was the '50's in America. In Columbus, Ohio. We lived in what I called the Uppity Negro part of town. A Black Congressman lived on our street! Ooooooooooo! Our crown to glory and it was a mixed neighbor, though later I found all the white people lived on the outskirts of our home complexes, the more blacks who *moved into* our area, the more whites *moved out* of the outer area.

The point I am making here is that we didn't live in a ghetto or the poor side of town. I had no idea what a ghetto was until my parents divorced.

Dad was the real stoic type, and pretty much stayed outside the family picture unless uncommon discipline was needed. His routine was simple. Get up, go to work, come home, sit in the same chair and read the daily newspaper, eat, watch T.V., go to bed, rinse and repeat.

I thought my dad and the neighborhood Preacher were Satan.

I can only remember Dad intervening only two or three times when Bernie and I did something really bad before he divorced my Mom, or should I say, my Mom divorced him. He made sure Bernie and I never fought. And we never did.

And I remember my Dad teaching us not to break the Law for the cops were mean and especially mean to little Negro boys.

It worked, my brother never went to jail. I went about two or three times being the rebel I was, but never stayed more than 24 hours. And never for any major offense.

But like most true witches in history {more innocent Christians were tortured and murdered for witchcraft then real witches}, my brother and I were never brought to trial for our truly 'sinful deeds' which included:

- Destroying our toys.
- Destroying our neighbors toys.
- Blowing up an ant hill with a firecracker.
- Making 'Debby' pull down her panties in a barrel in the alley, but that was intentional.
- Setting G.I. Joe on fire...that was an accident...
- Staining Charlie's Sunday School shirt and ripping his Sunday school blue suit {Charles was our next door neighbor's best good friend, the same age as my brother}. ..again, another accident.

I always was fascinated by nature and I had a natural affinity with animals and mother nature. I thought I had a complete affinity with the whole universe!

As far as I was concerned, any kid who harmed or abused animals had a serious mental problem.

Other 'sins' we committed were, Ditching Sunday school and Church, and making fun of our next door neighbor's friend, the son of the Congressman, named Steve, for stuttering. And a slew of other things too numerous to mention here.

And good 'ol Bernie was with me all the way, normally the silent instigator of what we ended up doing! But we never got caught, but for a few times, for we were God's little Angels. We could do no wrong. At least none that anybody knew about.

I think even God would have been amused at some of the things we did. God must have a keen sense of humor! But it was Bernie who knew how to keep me entertained and laughing. We made fun of everything.

"When I was young, I thought I would laugh forever, Find the humor, Nothing sacred."

We were not the "Momma Sings the Blues" family that you see almost every time you pick up a book by a black author. We were not rich. But we were far from being poor.

And if you think there is no 'caste system' in America, you better think again. It is as sure as the American flag. But it is invisible and you are told it doesn't exist. But it does. And those who know...KNOW.

It is there as clearly as nepotism and the invisible double standard. If the right person knows you, {or you are related} you get the high paying job. If you don't know the right people, you go to the back of the unemployment line.

And 'those who make the rules, don't have to live by the rules.'

We lived in a mixed neighborhood so I thought, until I realized we lived in a black neighborhood with white people surrounding us.

There was no 'caste system' in America, so I thought again, but unless you made upper middle class money you were never gonna be my neighbor, black, white, or brown.

Now, all I have written is true, and I really didn't exaggerate well, maybe a little, but I did over aggrandize my family because I am proud of them and I had to change a few of the names to protect the guilty, namely me.

We were the black American version of The American Dream in 1950. In a world that was still mostly ruled by insidious prejudice and segregation, I had no idea of racism. We were brought up to love all human beings regardless of the color of their skin or nationality.

In fact, I always thought that as a family of black people we put way too much emphasis on 'other people' than ourselves.

I really loved my dad and mom and my whole family. "Love Thy Neighbor as thyself." Was the Christian way. And we were Christians by all means, even my dad who I thought was a secret Satanist because I found out later that he was a member of the original FreeMasons who worshiped the image of Satan.

My brother, outside of Superman, Flash, Sherlock Holmes, and Tarzan, was my childhood hero at the time. He was someone to look up to even if he wasn't my brother.

And I looked up to him even though we were less than a year apart. And he is someone to emulate. But I couldn't emulate him because I could not emulate *no one!* I was always a stickier for being myself no matter what the circumstances or situations.

But I like to think that some of the good traits he had, I adopted as my own.

Oh, we all have our 'dark {darker?} side right?, our shadow as Jung called it, but this book is about the positive elements in my life and especially in my family.

Today I know it is better and know it is paramount to be your *own* personal hero and you can still have other heroes also, but the number one hero should be you!

Bernie still lives on as one of my many heroes, for a 'working-class hero is something to be.' But I got other heroes too, both men and women.

I wanted the world to know that I could not have had a better family.

I realized I have eternal love for them and nothing will ever change that.

Its' greater than the mere human emotions of love. And that love extends to the world.

I don't love everyone personally, but I do love most people impersonally in that I wish you well and increased love, joy, and wisdom.

Maybe a holy or sacred book can tell you about Eternal Love, but eternal love can't be found or contained in a book or a zillion books.

True love of God, Self and others can only be found and come from within you. From a real, beating heart.

"KEEP THE FIRE IN YOUR HEART, NOT IN YOUR HEAD."

All else, no matter how lofty, is an illusion, imaginary, and fake {unreal}.

My brother, my sister, my mom and dad, and grandma and pa, and all my family share an eternal love within me. Something I thought I never had. And have discovered forever.

For this, I AM ETERNALLY GRATEFUL and THANKFUL.

"The love they gave and shared nothing can compare."

"...Gave me Peace of Mind. Something my daddy never had."

-Elton John, Philadelphia Freedom.

Actually my dad did have great Peace Of Mind and Love,

And hoped I passed some of it along to you...

Until Book Two, Cheers!

Outro

Yet, I would not deceive you though and tell you all was a bowl of cherries in the Peterson's Klan, as stated earlier, I left out the down side of my life, and I veered off the straight and narrow path {I called it religious dogma, they called it backsiding} many, many times so to say, but always in the *Name of Truth and Science!*

But for a kid who never knew what *'THE TRUTH' was in the first place, I* could really get into a lot of trouble.

Children are to be seen, NOT heard!

As a Seeker of Truth, I found there are many truths of one Truth, but exactly what that one Truth interpretation is varies among different people and sects.

Yet no one can deny the truth of your personal experiences and that makes you an expert of them. And you should share them. One of the main reasons so many blacks are so behind in success is that we do not share information like we did in the past.

So I hope this little book serves as an introduction to my family and to show you a 'different version' of black people who weren't always struggling to make ends meet or singing the blues all the time, or being 'blessed to have nothing', as so many other black authors wrote about in this timeframe.

Remember:

"Good Times?" {D-Y-N-O-M-I-T-E!}

No, baby! If that was GOOD TIMES with Florida and good old Jimmie Walker, this was *BAD TIMES for we were not poor, hardly making ends meet black ghetto family by a long shot* and I loved every second of it!

...while it lasted.

Too bad childhood has to end!

...Or does it?

Looking out the eyes of a nine year old boy, I hope my glimpse into the past helped remind you of some of your happier childhood moments and experiences. And if you did not have any, let this book serve as a possibility of what a happy family can be like now and in the near future. Maybe even your family now. If the shoe fits...

Now we all stand somewhere between 'perfect' and 'imperfect', I just highlighted the happier and funnier times in my happy childhood.

I thought it would be nice to look on the brighter side of life for a change.

But in THE GREAT AMERICAN BLACK HERO II, The Devil In Paradise, things are not so lightly lit.

I dive deep into my mind and bring out the monsters, the demons, the unholy ghosts!

I developed ESP powers, not Extra Sensory Perception which is a fallacy, but EXTENDED SENSORY PERCEPTION OR PROJECTION.

In 'The Great American Black Hero, Book II, The Devil In Paradise', you will find out what made me convert from being a devoted Christian for over 40 years to an Atheist and then a Satanist, and then a Transcendentalist or PSI BEING.

You will see how the 'Devil' tricked me into being a righteous, vengeful, 'demon' and how I got out of that one!

What it was like to walk 'The Boulevard of Broken Dreams' during my short but sweet acting career in Hollywood, it's NOT what you think!

And you will also meet a man {or is he really a demon?} who looks like Jesus Christ who has over half the world following him as the new 'Billy Graham', but something about him just doesn't feel right... and, well read it for yourself and find out!

And how and why I made this transformation from loser to Winner.

Until then, Cheers!

B. L. Peterson

THE GREAT AMERICAN BLACK HERO TRILOGY

The Great American Black Hero:
Book One: Little Angels
The Great American Black Hero:
Book Two: The Devil in Paradise
The Great American Black Hero:
Book Three: Brewster's Billions

Email me at esolvency1@gmail.com if you are interested in reading BOOK TWO of The Greatest American Black Hero. I will let you know when it will be released.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bruce LaMarr Peterson

I was born in Columbus, Ohio and have been writing for over half a century.

I write to be a part of American History, and hopefully to inspire other black writers and all writers in general to tell their story from a positive perspective. I believe by sharing our true stories we can learn from each other and make a better world for all of us.

I graduated from Ohio Dominican University with a B. A. in Psychology and Telecommunications, served in the U.S. Navy as an Electronics Technician for over 4 years, I spent two and a half years in Electronics School and at the same time attended a Theologian Bible College for one year to study the original text and origin of the Bible, both Old Testament {Hebrew} and New Testament {Roman/Greek/Latin}.

I also served for one year as a Missionary for The Way Ministry in Dam Neck, Virginia with 3 other male Christians who had to secure our own housing, jobs, convert new prospects, and tithe to the The Way Ministry 10 percent of all our household income.

After one year we would have to save $500.00, give it to the ministry and wait for them to assign us to another {damn necked} place in America and start all over again with our $500.00 each! I quit after one year. Church is a business not LIFE STYLE!

I joined The Children of God cult but decided to leave when they decided to go to the islands for America was going to be destroyed for her increasing sins with a nuclear fallout and they all moved to the nearby islands off of Florida.

They were like a Charles Manson 'hippy family' who let their half naked babies gnaw on a ham bone for dinner and everybody was 'married' to someone else though there were no illicit sex activities.

I still wanted to be the best soldier for Jesus so I studied with Scientology and served in their prestigious Sea Org while in Hollywood where I worked to be an Actor/Writer.

I finally saw religion for what it really was for me-a money-making program that exploited the downtrodden, those abandoned by families, those seeking truth, and most of all those enduring FEAR and GUILT!

I always wanted to change the world, be someone who was remembered and loved.

To come into the world and leave without ever leaving a mark, {I had no children} was a fate, to me, worse than death.

Acting in a few movies and TV movies, my claim-to-fame was a non-speaking bit part {about 20 seconds} in Cheech and Chong's Second Movie, I played a welfare teller in one of their funny skits in Hollywood and met the now known star called Pee Wee Herman.

I finally landed a job working as a TV writer for Paramount Studios before I got fired for complaining about how they were not paying me to write scripts they kept for future use as their writing property, and not mine.

I have written over 70 self-help and self-empowering books but without reason Amazon closed my Kindle account and I had to get a third party to publish my books anonymously in their stores.

I am also the Founder and President of The MetaPsychics Foundation, a spiritual organization for spiritual development and growth of the inner man or PSI BEING.

Our Motto is:

"Helping Others, Helping Themselves."

“By Changing Yourself, You Changed The World.”

MetaPsychics is the only Spiritual and Transcendental Technology available to mankind today.

“I am always interested in your comments and feedback. Feel free to email me and let me know what you think about this and any other books I have written. Any helpful feedback is greatly appreciated and your comments help make me a better writer and you a better person.

Thank You!

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